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Mr N Bailey  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Bailey

Ofsted survey inspection programme – modern languages

Thank you for your hospitality and co-operation, and that of your staff and pupils, during my visit on 2 July 2007 to look at work in modern languages (ML).

As outlined in my initial letter, as well as looking at key areas of the subject, the visit had a particular focus on implementing languages entitlement.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions, but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text. All feedback letters will be published on the Ofsted website at the end of each half-term.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included: interviews with staff and pupils, scrutiny of relevant documentation, analysis of pupils' work and observation of one lesson.

The overall effectiveness of ML was judged to be satisfactory.

Achievement and standards

Achievement in ML is satisfactory considering the short length of time that pupils have learned or have been learning a modern language.

- Progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory. Pronunciation is good and pupils respond promptly and appropriately to familiar questions and instructions.

- Progress in reading and writing is satisfactory. Pupils match words with meaning and are able to infer the meaning of some unfamiliar words from context and visual clues. They are able to read a story with the teacher for gist and some detail. They label accurately and write short sentences adapting set phrases to change meaning. They are beginning to identify simple patterns from their reading and apply them to their own work with guidance.
- Pupils' response is positive in lessons but their attitudes towards learning languages are mixed. Many enjoy their language learning, especially games and songs, and would like to learn at a faster rate, use the Internet to explore cultural and social issues more fully and have the opportunity to learn more than one language. Others do not appreciate the benefits of learning a language.

### Quality of teaching and learning of modern languages

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

- The teacher's subject knowledge is good and her knowledge of methodology is developing. At present, the range of activities and learning strategies is limited.
- New language and structures are presented clearly using visuals and modelling so that pupils rapidly understand and use new language themselves.
- Songs and games are used to good effect to consolidate learning and engage pupils.
- Whole class reading activities are used effectively to reinforce key words and phrases and to enable pupils to identify and apply patterns.
- Assessment information is not always used effectively to meet the needs of the more able pupils who become restless and too chatty when they find tasks too easy, the pace slows or they are not directly involved in activities.

### Quality of curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is satisfactory.

- The school uses a published scheme of work based on the Languages Framework for Key Stage 2. However, strategies to meet the needs of pupils of different ability, particularly those of the more able, are not evident in the school's planning.
- Pupils have one 45 minute lesson once a week. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for music or for extra help with English and mathematics. As a result, their progress is slowed. The school should reconsider this model in order to ensure that all pupils can make the same progress.
- The use of information and communication technology is limited.

- Opportunities are missed to build on pupils' home / heritage backgrounds in developing pupils' language and cultural awareness and to promote intercultural understanding.
- There have been initial meetings with partner schools but plans for continuity and progression in Year 7 are not yet clear.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to use language in drama and songs, to celebrate their achievement in assembly 'Golden Time', and to use their language to make pop up books for younger pupils.
- The 'French Day' is used effectively to develop pupils' cultural understanding.

### Leadership and management of modern languages

The quality of leadership and management of modern languages is satisfactory.

- Local support services, for example, advisers and Advanced Skills Teachers, provide good support.
- There has been effective training, both locally and abroad, for the teacher with responsibility for coordinating French to improve her subject knowledge and knowledge of methodology to deliver the subject.
- Local networking is at the early stages of development.
- There are plans for monitoring achievement and provision in languages and an awareness of priorities for development, including the need to liaise with, and provide assessment information for, the local secondary schools.

### Implementing languages entitlement

Progress towards entitlement is satisfactory.

- The senior leadership team provide good support and there is a commitment to the subject. The school has the capacity to make progress in implementing entitlement.
- All pupils in Key Stage 2 study French and there are plans to teach French to all pupils from September 2007. This is the first year that French has been taught in the school so it is at the very early stages of development.

### Inclusion

- Although all pupils in Key Stage 2 are involved, some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for music or for extra help with English and mathematics. As a result, their progress is slowed.
- Assessment information is not used effectively to meet the needs of the higher attaining language learners and so their progress is not as good as it could be.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, included:

- ensuring all pupils have equal access to the provision for languages
- developing effective links and a clear curriculum plan with the High Schools to ensure continuity and progression into Year 7
- making more effective use of assessment to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups, especially the higher attaining pupils.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop languages in the school.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be sent to your local authority. It will also be available to the team for your next institutional inspection.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley  
Additional Inspector